

The Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill makes long overdue investments to help care for and educate our Nation's children, including doubling the funding for Title I-A grants to local educational Agencies. That program I mentioned is the foundation of Federal support to schools across this country.

It also increases funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant by 23 percent, and Head Start by 11 percent. We do this to provide high-quality childcare and education to working families across the Nation.

It provides a 24-percent increase over last year for the Centers for Disease Control. That is done to strengthen U.S. public health infrastructure. We know we have to do that in the wake of a global pandemic that has created terrible problems in that area.

The Commerce, Justice, Science bill provides historic funding levels for the Department of Justice Violence Against Women Act programs. That is a 48-percent increase over the last fiscal year. It is the largest appropriation for the Violence Against Women Act since its creation.

The Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development bill includes significant increases to reduce homelessness and improve housing conditions and increase affordability—something that touches all 50 of our States.

The Interior bill includes significant resources to promote conservation, to preserve our natural infrastructure, and to protect our Federal lands. And we made climate change front and center when drafting these bills, and each contains new and critical funding to help combat this challenge.

For example, for the first time ever, we invested \$54 million in a new Climate Conservation Corps; and we provide historic increases, 46 percent over last year, for EPA's air and climate program. And, for the first time in 4 years, the U.S. will contribute to the Green Climate Fund and the Clean Technology Fund, rejoining the international fight—it has to be an international fight—against climate change. We had a global retreat with the last President. The United States is standing up again and is back in the game.

We also make historic investments in medical research. I don't know anybody who doesn't want us to always improve our medical research. It ensures that America remains on the cutting edge of advanced medical science and research. So we put a 6-percent increase for the National Institutes of Health, and \$2.4 billion to create the first ever Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health, and that is because of the President's bold and promising proposal to accelerate the pace of breakthroughs in medicine.

And, finally, the bills contain critical funding increases for mental and behavioral health services and to combat substance abuse—something that is a problem in every single State. These

funds are desperately needed, as we saw the rates of anxiety and depression soar during the COVID-19 pandemic and drug overdose deaths are expected to reach their highest levels to date.

Now, these are just some of the highlights of the important programs funded in the nine bills we released yesterday. They make a real difference in the lives of millions of Americans, especially after the tough year and a half we faced with COVID-19. These bills demonstrate the good work we can do with a topline in fiscal year 2022 budget resolution, which was passed by the Senate and the House earlier this year.

Now, I wish we could have followed regular order and done these bills in committee, but our Republican colleagues said they would prevent any additional consideration of bills until we have a negotiated topline. I cannot and will not allow that to stop our work. It would be irresponsible. We need to move the ball forward. In posting these bills, we show the American people what we are for.

Now, some on the other side of the aisle may characterize these bills as partisan. That is simply not true. In the spirit of comity and bipartisanship, which is the tradition of our Appropriations Committee, we worked hard to accommodate the funding priorities of all Members, both Democrats and Republicans. And the posted bills reflect that effort with many, many, many of the priorities of Republicans and many of the priorities of Democrats.

I am proud of the work of this committee in producing these bills, but our job is not done. The Federal Government is existing under and operating under a continuing resolution only until December 3. Time can go by very quickly around here. Between now and then, it is imperative that we make progress on negotiating a topline—one that is bipartisan and bicameral—so we can enact these bills into law.

I think we struck the right balance with the bills we produced and made public this week. As with everything in Congress, we rarely end where we begin.

So I look forward to working with Chair DELAUNO, Ranking Member GRANGER, and Vice Chairman SHELBY to move this process forward with the goal of enacting all 12 bills by December 3.

If we fail to do that, then we face a long-term continuing resolution, which would lock in outdated spending priorities that will not serve the American people, will not meet the challenges of today, and, unfortunately, will not contain those things that both Republicans and Democrats have asked and were submitted and included in the bills that we have put in.

I know that my friend and colleague from Texas is waiting to speak.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I thank my friend, the senior Senator from Vermont, for his courtesy.

Tomorrow, the Senate will vote on the latest iteration of what has come to be known as the Democrats' partisan power grab over our elections conducted overwhelmingly by the States—actually, exclusively at the State and local level.

The legislation that prompted this discussion first popped up in 2019, when the newly elected majority in the House went on a messaging bill spree. Over the last 2 years, they have tried a number of different marketing strategies to convince the American people that this overhaul was needed.

This latest version is proof that Congress isn't buying what they are selling, and that is for good reason.

Those who were advocating for a national takeover of our State-run elections, at one point they said it was a matter of election security. Then they said this was designed to help restore voter confidence. Then they said this is a way to remove obstacles that prevented people from voting.

But facts are stubborn things. In 2020, we saw record turnout. Two-thirds of eligible voters cast a ballot, and that was the highest turnout in 120 years.

I was on the ballot in 2020. The last time I had been on the ballot, 6 years previously, there were 4.8 million voters in Texas. In 2020, there were 11.3 million voters in Texas. Compared to the 2016 Presidential election, 17 million more Americans cast a vote, and we saw historic turnouts by Black, White, Asian, and Hispanic voters.

So facts being stubborn things, clearly it is time for the advocates for this Federal takeover to come up with a new sales pitch. So our Democratic friends attacked election integrity bills being passed by State legislatures, like Texas, all across the country.

The Constitution itself gives States the power to determine how their elections should be run, and States are using that authority to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat.

Our Democratic friends have tried to frame these new State laws as somehow suppressing voting rights. As we have seen, if that is the objective, they certainly are doing a lousy job at it because people are voting in unprecedented numbers.

Well, it is interesting to contrast some of the changes that our Democratic colleagues, including the Merrick Garland's Department of Justice, comparing the reforms they have attacked and those that they believe are just fine.

The Georgia law, which the Department of Justice has sued under section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, actually expanded early voting in person to 17 days. But if you live in Massachusetts, you can only vote for 11 days. I haven't heard many complaints about the Massachusetts voting laws restricting people's access to the polls. And the President's home State of Delaware, they

don't even offer in-person early voting, but they will in 2022. But even then, they are even more restrictive than Massachusetts. It will only be for 10 days.

So somehow a short period of early voting in Delaware is acceptable—actually, currently is not available but soon to be acceptable for 10 days—but 17 days of early voting in Georgia is an assault on voting rights. Both cannot be true.

Of course, our Democratic friends believe the only answer to this manufactured assault is an unconstitutional, partisan power grab that they have been pushing for years, as I said. Well, the initial iteration of this came up for a vote in June, and it was sadly rejected, for good reason. The bill would have turned the bipartisan Federal Election Commission into a Democrat-controlled Commission. This is supposed to be evenly split and non-partisan, but that would change under the proposal that we voted on in June.

It would have also allowed ballot harvesting—a dubious practice that is a recipe for mischief and wrongdoing, as a ballot could be harvested by paid campaign staffers, political operative, or anyone who had a stake in the outcome of the election. Just go to your closest nursing home or community center, get people to sign a ballot, and harvest away. That would have been permitted. And, actually, prohibitions against ballot harvesting would have been prohibited under the Democrats' bill.

And the bill would have commandeered States' constitutional authority to draw their own congressional districts. The only thing this proposal would have done for the people, as it is called, would be to help make sure that the outcome of virtually every future election meant that Democrats win and Republicans lose; thus, Republicans would be relegated to a permanent minority status. That was the goal.

If this bill weren't so dangerous, it would have been laughable. Nobody would have taken it seriously. It is no surprise that the only thing bipartisan about this legislation is the opposition. In both the House and the Senate, Republicans and Democrats voted against this legislation.

Still, our Democratic colleagues—I admire their perseverance—they refused to throw in the towel. They decided to work on what they now call a compromise.

Well, generally, a compromise indicates that you have found common ground with somebody who holds a different view. But the so-called compromise bill we are scheduled to vote on tomorrow isn't the result of negotiations between Republicans and Democrats; it is a compromise between the left and the radical left. You really can't call something a compromise when your negotiating partner is sitting on the same side of the table with you.

All this is done to create the illusion or a narrative that the partisan pieces have been stripped out of the bill and it now includes mainstream reforms. But that is far from the truth.

Just like its predecessor, this bill seizes States' constitutional authority to make decisions on matters like voter registration and early voting. It contains invasive disclosure requirements that would undermine citizens' privacy and chill free speech. It places Federal standards on States for redistricting, and threatens action from the Democratic-controlled Attorney General's Office if those standards aren't met. And it makes it harder to root out election fraud, and easier to cheat.

If that is not bad enough, it also takes tax dollars from the American taxpayer and would require it be given to candidates for public office that those taxpayers disagree with. They call that public funding of elections.

Nothing about the bill is a compromise. They may have stripped out some of the most outrageous provisions, but certainly overtly partisan provisions remain.

Republicans uniformly oppose the first attempt at this partisan power grab, and it is no surprise we will oppose this one as well.

This is not a good-faith attempt to ensure our elections are secure from fraud and interference and accessible to all eligible voters. It is rather a political stunt and statement designed to mislead the American people and appeal to the most radical members of the Democratic base.

I am certainly not one to tell the majority leader how to do his job, but it seems like show votes ought to be pretty low on our list of priorities.

Our Democrat colleagues narrowly averted a debt crisis 2 weeks ago, and they have less than 2 months to figure out how to increase the debt ceiling and avoid an economic disaster.

In the coming months, the Senate needs to do what has become an annual tradition, which is to pass the National Defense Authorization Act to give our troops the support they deserve and our commanders the predictability they need for the future. And we need to pass a full slate of appropriations bills to avoid a government shutdown just before the holidays. Those are the things we need to do, at a bare minimum.

We should also be advancing legislation to avert—or to address the border crisis, which has been raging on since January. We need to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. We need to bring down sky-high drug prices, and approve accountability and transparency in policing.

There is a lot we should be doing to solve real problems that deserve action from the country and which our constituents deserve as well.

There is a strong appetite for bipartisan work on both sides of the aisle, but the leadership of the Democratic Party has effectively stonewalled bi-

partisan legislating in favor of a completely partisan approach. It is really a head-scratcher.

Our Democratic colleagues don't have the kind of majorities that FDR had during the New Deal. We have a 50-50 Senate, with the Vice President as the tie-breaker. Common sense ought to tell you that that demands and requires bipartisan legislating, not these kinds of show votes.

We have a long list of tasks that are far more important than virtue signaling. So I hope our colleagues will reevaluate the wisdom of this parade of partisan bills and spend time working with us to find where we have common ground, where we can actually pass legislation and make a difference for our country.

Until that time, we will continue to oppose partisan attacks on our Nation's elections and any other damaging, politically motivated bills Democrats bring to the Senate floor.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, with regard to the comments of the esteemed Senator from Texas, I say to the Senator: I would suggest, if your colleagues are interested in election reform and election laws, that we have a dialogue and that we have some discussion. I would welcome a proposal from your side of the aisle on election laws and how we deal with efforts to suppress the vote in other parts of the country, and also to change the Electoral Count Act.

Is the Senator interested in those and entering into such discussions?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if I may respond to the Senator from Maine.

I am always interested in working on bipartisan bills and finding common ground. I think my record—and as the Senator knows, we have worked together on a number of things. The fundamental problem with our Democratic friends' approach to election reform is they want to nationalize the election. They want to take the authority away from the States, which is clearly given to the States under the Constitution.

But if we can take that off the table and talk about some other areas, we could work together in that area, I would be more than happy to work with my friend from Maine.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Not to prolong the discussion, but Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution makes it abundantly clear that the responsibility for election administration is a joint one between the States and the Congress, and that the Congress, at any time, can alter regulations or the efforts to control the vote in a particular State.

That has been true ever since the drafting of the Constitution. It was true at the time of passage of the 15th Amendment. It was true at the time of the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

So I look forward to the possibility of working with any colleague on protecting the sacred right to vote in this country.

I will have further comments on this legislation today.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 261, Christine P. O'Hearn, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

Charles E. Schumer, Brian Schatz, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert Menendez, Tammy Duckworth, Christopher A. Coons, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Jacky Rosen, Patrick J. Leahy, Mazie Hirono, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tammy Baldwin, Richard J. Durbin, Chris Van Hollen, Tina Smith, Ben Ray Lujan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Christine P. O'Hearn, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

(Mr. LUJÁN assumed the Chair.)

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 415 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Sinema
Casey	Lujan	Smith
Collins	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murkowski	Warnock
Feinstein	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Graham	Ossoff	Wyden
Hassan	Padilla	

NAYS—44

Barrasso	Cotton	Hagerty
Blackburn	Cramer	Hawley
Boozman	Crapo	Hoeven
Braun	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Burr	Daines	Inhofe
Capito	Ernst	Johnson
Cassidy	Fischer	Kennedy
Cornyn	Grassley	Lankford

Lee	Risch	Sullivan
Lummis	Romney	Thune
Marshall	Rubio	Toomey
McConnell	Sasse	Tuberville
Moran	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Paul	Scott (SC)	Young
Portman	Shelby	

NOT VOTING—3

Blunt	Rounds	Tillis
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SINEMA). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:01 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

NOMINATION OF CHRISTINE P. O'HEARN

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, today I rise in support of the confirmation of Ms. Christine O'Hearn to the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. I was proud to recommend Ms. O'Hearn for this nomination. She has the qualifications, intellect, and the temperament necessary to make an excellent and impartial Federal judge, and I am confident that she will serve the U.S. District of New Jersey well.

A proud South Jersey native, Ms. O'Hearn was born in Camden, graduated from the University of Delaware, and earned her juris doctor from Temple University's Beasley School of Law in Philadelphia. She is an expert in employment and labor law who has worked on behalf of both employers and workers during her impressive career.

She is currently a partner at the firm of Brown & Connery in Westmont, NJ, where she is highly regarded by her colleagues for her keen insight and confident command of the issues at hand in every case she takes on. Twice she was named one of the Top 40 attorneys under 40 in New Jersey. She has also been featured in New Jersey Law Journal's "Women and Minorities in the Profession." Ms. O'Hearn also previously served as an adjunct professor at Rutgers University School of Law in Camden.

In 2020, Ms. O'Hearn was appointed to the U.S. Magistrate Judge Selection Committee and has served on various distinguished boards, including the New Jersey State Committee of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the New Jersey Court's District IV Ethics Committee.

And this year—this gives you an insight of the person that she is beyond her competence and capability and intellect—she has spent more than 85 hours volunteering as a pro bono attorney for newly arriving Afghan refugees

in Fort Dix, NJ, informing them of their rights and helping them navigate our complicated immigration laws. She described this work as immensely fulfilling and humbling, and I hope it inspires others in the legal profession to lend a hand to the nationwide refugee resettlement effort.

Ms. O'Hearn's professional credentials, combined with her compassion and commitment to the fair and impartial administration of justice, will make her an outstanding judge.

Finally, I would like to remind my colleagues that the U.S. District of New Jersey is one of the busiest courts in all of America. As of last year, more than 46,000 cases were pending before it, many of them among the most complex and challenging cases in the Nation.

Yet multiple vacancies on the court have left its seated judges with some of the highest caseloads in the country, prompting the Judicial Conference of the United States to declare them judicial emergencies.

Now, we have made some encouraging progress on that front in recent months. However, the people of New Jersey deserve nothing less than a fully staffed district court, not to mention all of the parties with business pending before it.

I am confident that Ms. O'Hearn's experience and intellectual rigor will be an asset to the U.S. District Court of New Jersey, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in support of her swift confirmation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote that was scheduled for 2:30 occur immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON O'HEARN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the O'Hearn nomination?

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 416 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Baldwin	Brown	Casey
Bennet	Cantwell	Collins
Blumenthal	Cardin	Coons
Booker	Carper	Cortez Masto